

Forum: Human Rights Commission

Topic: Addressing the ongoing humanitarian crises and civilian protection in the civil war in Sudan

Chair

Introduction

The Sudanese civil war is considered to be one of the most severe and devastating humanitarian crises in the world today, impacting many civilians and posing a threat to regional stability in northeast Africa. Since the conflict erupted in April 2023 between the Sudanese armed forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), civilians have endured widespread displacement, violence, hunger, and limited access to basic needs and essential services.

The ongoing conflict has severely damaged hospitals, educational facilities, markets, and vital infrastructure. As a result, protecting civilians has become a major international priority, especially given that conditions continue to deteriorate while humanitarian access remains restricted. The devastating consequences of the ongoing conflict have reached unprecedented levels, leaving millions in need of protection and critical aid while placing Sudan among the most severe humanitarian crises facing the international community today.

Beyond the battlefield, the conflict has far-reaching consequences on Sudan and the surrounding area. According to United Nations reports, over 14 million people have been displaced since the conflict began, making Sudan one of the largest displacement crises globally. Moreover, it is estimated that approximately 30 million people across the country require humanitarian aid, while millions continue to face severe food insecurity and a lack of proper healthcare. As civilians flee the country to escape violence in search of security, neighboring countries have experienced growing pressure on their resources and public services due to the rising number of refugees. As a result, the conflict has transformed from a domestic crisis into a regional and international issue that is in urgent need of assistance and global cooperation.

This issue closely relates to the AMMUN theme “Moderating Morality,” as it highlights the international community's obligation to address human rights violations in a manner that is both ethical and effective. This crisis poses complex challenges that require a balance between the duty to protect civilians and the long-term goal of achieving peace and stability. In addition to that, efforts to address the crisis must take into account the importance of respecting Sudan’s sovereignty, while at the same time ensuring that assistance is given to those in need and human rights are upheld. As governments and international organizations work to tackle displacement, food insecurity, and widespread human rights violations, they must also consider how best to maintain human dignity while executing practical and sustainable solutions. Through collaboration, accountability, and informed decision-making,

the international community can play a critical role in mitigating suffering and contribute to a safer and more just future for Sudan and the surrounding region.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

With around 17.1 million women and girls in need of humanitarian aid in Sudan, Gender Based Violence (GBV) has proved to be one of the most pressing human rights violations in conflict-driven areas. GBV refers to violence directed at a certain individual because of their gender. This includes rape, stalking, physical and psychological violence, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, and sexual harassment. However, in this conflict, these actions are not random outbursts, but calculated attacks used to assert dominance and power over the population.

Darfur

Occupying a space almost as big as the size of France, Darfur is a vast region in western Sudan primarily known today as the epicentre of a severe humanitarian crisis and ongoing conflict. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have strongholds throughout Darfur, but it also controls territory elsewhere in Sudan.

Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Internally displaced persons are people who were forced to flee their homes to escape violence and armed conflict in search of safety. However, they differ from refugees as these individuals remain within the country and do not cross an international border, leaving them under the legal protection of the government. The Sudanese civil war has created one of the most severe displacement crises in the world, with an estimated 9 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) as of April 2026.

Paramilitary force

A paramilitary force is an organization that possesses a semi-militarized structure, training, and equipment similar to a professional military force but still operates alongside or independently of a state's regular military forces. An example of a paramilitary group is the RSF, led by General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, more widely known as Hemedti.

International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Also known as the law of war, the International Humanitarian Law (IHL) consists of a

set of rules that seek to limit the impacts of armed conflict by protecting those not participating in the war and reducing the methods and means of warfare. One key characteristic of IHL is that it does not aim to place restrictions on whether a state has the right to use force or not; rather, it strives to regulate how people participating in the war behave once the conflict has already started.

Ethnic cleansing

Ethnic cleansing is defined as the organized and coercive expulsion of a certain ethnic, religious, or cultural group from a specific region using force and violence, to create an ethnically homogeneous area. This term is particularly relevant, as many allegations have been raised about ethnically targeted violence in Darfur by international organizations and human rights bodies.

General Overview

Historical background and origins of the conflict

The roots of the ongoing conflict can be traced back to when the former president Omar Al-Bashir was in office, who seized power during a military coup in 1989 and ruled for nearly 3 decades before his ousting. Throughout his rule, Sudan was heavily influenced by military and security institutions, while political liberties and opposition were suppressed. For a substantial part of this time, the country was embroiled in the second Sudanese civil war, a conflict that lasted until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005, resulting in the loss of approximately 2 million lives and 4 million IDPs. The enduring conflict, along with the political instability and uneven economic development, led to increasing divisions within Sudanese society. Instead of addressing these challenges through institutional nonviolent reforms, the government kept relying on the military and armed groups to maintain control, creating a security framework that would later play a significant role in the outbreak of the Sudan Civil War.

The consequences of this militarized approach became significantly clear when the Darfur conflict took place in 2003, a turning point for Sudan. Rebel groups, particularly the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), initiated an insurgency against the

government, citing decades of political and economic marginalization in the region. In response to this, the government decided to support and provide weapons to Arab Militias known as the Janjaweed with orders to suppress the rebellion. The conflict soon escalated into one of the most devastating humanitarian crises of the 21st century, claiming the lives of around 200,000 individuals and displacing over 2.1 million people, according to estimates by the United Nations (UN). Due to the extent of the violence, the situation received widespread condemnation from international organizations and bodies, which soon prompted the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue arrest warrants for several Sudanese officials, including Omar Al-Bashir. And more significantly, this conflict enhanced militia networks that would eventually build the foundation for the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), a key player in the current civil war.

In 2013, the Sudanese government officially established the RSF, building on networks formed during the Darfur conflict, with Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, more widely known as Hemedti, as the leader. Originally, when the RSF was created, they were tasked with the job of countering opposition groups in areas affected by the conflict; the RSF grew swiftly in both size and influence, becoming one of the most powerful security forces in the nation. However, unlike traditional military units, it operated under a unique and distinct command structure separate from the SAF, despite still receiving state support. Over time, the RSF gained significant economic and political power, especially through its connections to Sudan’s gold sector. Ultimately, the country developed two highly influential armed institutions that operated alongside each other, creating a precarious balance of power that would grow increasingly unstable over the next few years.

Following the removal of former president Omar al-Bashir, hope and optimism spread throughout the country, with people wishing for a democratic transition. This led to the creation of a power-sharing government that included both civilian and military representatives. However, tensions persisted as military officials still held a massive amount of power over political decisions. There were many obstacles during the transition, such as the Khartoum Massacre in June 2019, which led to the

death of 128 innocent protesters and an increase in public distrust towards military units. In October 2021, General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan led a military coup that dismantled the transitional government, effectively halting the country's progress to democratic governance. Further discussions regarding the integration of the RSF into the SAF revealed significant rifts between the two leaders, Burhan and Hemedti. As the relationship between the two continued to deteriorate, armed conflict broke out on the 15th of April 2023, marking the start of the Sudan Civil War.

Humanitarian Impact of the Conflict

Since the beginning of the Civil War in 2023, the nation has descended into one of the most severe humanitarian crises in African history and the world, with civilians enduring most of the conflict's impact. According to the UN, around 14 million people have been displaced, many of whom are IDPs who have fled their homes while remaining inside the country. As a result, Sudan is currently experiencing the largest displacement crisis globally, with over 30 million people estimated to require humanitarian assistance and protection. This issue has caused severe damage to critical infrastructure and has significantly obstructed access to healthcare, education, food, and clean water, leaving many at risk of disease, malnutrition, and poverty. Food insecurity has also risen to alarming levels, with various areas in the country experiencing conditions similar to famine. Women and children have also been affected, with many experiencing forms of GBV, exploitation, displacement, and even interruptions in their education. Additionally, the extent of the refugee movement into neighbouring nations such as Chad, Egypt, and South Sudan has placed an additional strain on regional resources and public services, highlighting that the impacts of the conflict stretch far beyond Sudan's borders.

Civilian Protection and Human Rights Concerns

The protection of civilians tends to be one of the most pressing issues stemming from the civil war. As hostilities escalated in densely populated areas, countless individuals have lost their lives or sustained devastating

injuries, while residential areas, educational institutions, medical facilities, and other vital infrastructure have suffered damage or even destruction. Reports from the UN and humanitarian organizations have also highlighted assaults on lifesaving assistance services, ultimately restricting access to them. Such actions have raised international concerns about breaches of IHL.

Aside from the immediate threats posed by armed conflict, numerous reports have brought to light severe human rights violations against vulnerable groups. Specifically, accusations of ethnically motivated violence in Darfur, particularly against the Masalit community, have sparked concerns about potential ethnic cleansing and other possible violations of IHL, alongside widespread reports of GBV. These circumstances have amplified global demands for accountability and enhanced efforts to protect civilians amidst the conflict.

International Response and Ongoing Challenges

In response to the escalating crisis, a wide range of international and regional organizations have sought to deliver humanitarian assistance and encourage a ceasefire. While the UN has been busy coordinating the delivery and provision of humanitarian aid, the African Union (AU) and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have been involved in mediating and supporting dialogue between the conflicting parties. Global initiatives include ceasefire negotiations, diplomatic pressure, and demands for adherence to IHL, reflecting a more comprehensive effort to respond to both the pressing needs of civilians and the political factors involved in the conflict.

Additionally, the Right to Protect (R2P) principle holds significant importance in discussions regarding civilian safety in Sudan. Endorsed by UN member states in 2005, R2P establishes that it is the primary duty of states to safeguard their citizens from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Should a state be unwilling or unable to fulfil this duty, the international community is obligated to intervene through diplomatic, humanitarian, and other non violent

measures. In Sudan, this principle raises important debate over how the international community can enhance civilian protection without compromising the nation’s sovereignty or further escalating the conflict.

However, despite these initiatives, progress has been impeded by persistent fighting, barriers to humanitarian access, repeated breaches of ceasefire agreements, and significant shortages in funding. Consequently, millions of civilians remain hard to reach, while diplomatic efforts to secure a lasting resolution have seen limited success. Therefore, the Sudan Civil War persists as a complex challenge requiring both immediate humanitarian action and long-term efforts to achieve peace, stability, and civilian protection.

Major Parties Involved

The Rapid Support Forces (RSF)

The powerful paramilitary group fighting against the SAF in the Sudan Civil War, using different forms of violence to try and seize control over the country and its political future. In 2013, the faction arose from the networks of the notorious Janjaweed militias, formed during the Darfur conflict in 2003. Currently, the RSF is under the leadership of General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo, more widely known as Hemedti.

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) are the official, internationally recognized, national military forces of Sudan, currently a key player in the civil war opposing the RSF. The SAF is commanded by General Abdel Fattah Al-Burhan, who also serves as the de facto leader of the transitional government. To strengthen its core force of around 200,000 active troops during the ongoing war, the SAF is progressively turning to a network of tribal militias, such as the Sudanese Popular Resistance Force (SPRF), which consists of around 70,000 soldiers.

The African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) has significantly contributed to the resolution

of the Sudanese Civil War through countless mediation efforts, diplomatic activity, and advocacy for ceasefires. Contributing with other organizations, like the UN, the AU continues to strongly support and back initiatives that aim to protect civilian lives and humanitarian aid delivery.

Egypt

Egypt is an important regional player in the Sudan Civil War, due to its close security and political connections with the nation. Since the beginning of the conflict, Egypt has been involved in supporting many diplomatic efforts that enhance dialogue between the two sides, as the country has also received a great number of refugees. While promoting a unified Sudanese state, Egypt has typically been seen as supporting the SAF and backing up state institutions throughout the war.

The United Nations (UN)

The United Nations (UN) plays a vital role in mitigating the humanitarian effects of the Sudanese civil war. Through organizations such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and World Food Programme (WFP), the organization provides essential humanitarian aid to those affected, while also advocating for civilian protection, human rights, and peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has also been involved in mediating the conflict, emerging as a vital player, particularly through its role in hosting the Jeddah Peace Talks. Cooperating with international partners, the kingdom promotes humanitarian access as well as stimulates dialogue between the SAF and the RSF.

Timeline of Events

Date	Event
1983 / June / 5	The start of the 22-year conflict

	between the central government in Khartoum and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), with over 2 million casualties. The conflict began when the Sudanese government abolished southern autonomy and imposed Islamic Sharia rule nationwide.
1989 / June / 30	The military coup that overthrew Sudan's democratically elected government, led by Lieutenant General Omar Al-Bashir and his National Salvation Revolution Command Council (RCC)
2003 / February	The Darfur conflict occurs, where rebel groups revolted against the government, which fought back by arming the Janjaweed militias, which led to severe humanitarian consequences.
2005 / January / 9	The Comprehensive Peace Agreement is signed, marking the end of the battle.
2011 / July / 9	South Sudan officially proclaims itself as an independent nation, stripping Khartoum of 75% of its national oil revenues, plunging Sudan into economic instability.
2013 / August	Establishment of the RSF
2019 / April / 11	Following months of armed conflict and protests about democracy, the Sudanese army stepped in, arrested, and removed Omar Al-Bashir from power.

2019 / June / 3	The Khartoum massacre occurred, where the RSF attacked and killed 100 civilians taking part in a pro-democracy peaceful sit-in outside the military headquarters in Khartoum.
2021 / October / 25	General Al-Burhan and Hemedti led the coup, which dissolved the power of the transitional government, arresting the prime minister.
2023 / April / 15	Tensions between the two coup leaders escalated, and armed conflict erupted, sparking the start of the civil war between the RSF and SAF.
2025 / March / 26	Battle of Khartoum comes to an end after the SAF takes over the area, expelling the RSF from key central government ministries.
2026 / January - March	The battle for Kordofan took place, creating a clear boundary between the RSF-controlled west and SAF-dominated east

Attempts to solve the issue

One of the most notable attempts to solve the issue at hand was the Jeddah Peace Talks, which officially began in May 2023 and were co-facilitated by Saudi Arabia and the United States. The negotiations would bring together representatives from both the RSF and SAF to come to an agreement on a ceasefire and improve access to humanitarian aid. Although the talks would produce several short-term ceasefires and commitments to protect civilians, repeated violations from both sides obstructed meaningful implementation. Therefore, despite building a platform for dialogue, the

Jeddah Talks only had limited success in reducing the severity of the crisis.

Alongside the Jeddah Talks, regional bodies such as the AU and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) have been actively involved in fostering dialogue and mediation initiatives. Both organizations have advocated for the return to a political transition to civilian leadership. Furthermore, various diplomatic efforts have aimed to bring together the leaders of both the RSF and SAF to negotiate; however, the tensions between the two factions have constrained the effectiveness of these initiatives and blocked progress towards a lasting solution.

Resolution 2724. Resolution Date (2024/3/8) (S/RES/2724)

Resolution 2724 called for an immediate ceasefire of hostilities in Sudan during the holy month of Ramadan and highlighted the urgency of delivering humanitarian aid to those in need, as well as the protection of civilians. Although it was adopted, armed conflict persisted in some regions in Sudan, leading to a partially ineffective effort.

Possible Solutions

One possible solution to improving the current situation in Sudan could be strengthening humanitarian access in conflict-driven areas. Despite efforts by international organizations, many individuals still face challenges receiving the aid due to persistent armed conflict, damaged infrastructure, and delivery constraints. The establishment of humanitarian corridors, supervised by relevant bodies such as the UN, could help ensure the secure delivery of basic needs such as food, healthcare, safe water, and other crucial resources to affected regions in Sudan. Furthermore, improving the collaboration and communication between agencies and parties involved in the conflict could diminish barriers to aid distribution, allowing assistance to reach IDPs, refugees, and other populations at risk. Through improving humanitarian access, the international community would be more capable of reducing suffering and addressing the pressing needs of civilians in the conflict.

Another potential solution would be to establish a stronger UN-led

monitoring and investigative framework to supervise and oversee the current situation in Sudan. Such a framework could track compliance with ceasefire agreements, IHL violations, and issue independent reports on attacks on civilians and humanitarian aid workers. By fostering greater transparency and international oversight, this framework could help prevent further abuses, increase accountability, and even provide the international community with more reliable information regarding attacks.

Furthermore, another approach could be to set up internationally monitored humanitarian protection zones in areas that have been severely affected by the conflict. In places like hospitals, camps for IDPs, educational facilities, and centers for humanitarian distribution, by working with the UN and other relevant parties, these zones could assist in decreasing civilian casualties and harm by protecting vulnerable groups. By establishing safer environments, this solution could lessen the humanitarian toll on the country.

Guiding Questions

- Has the Sudanese civil war affected your country politically, economically, or socially?
- Does your country have any connections to Sudan?
- What is your country's position on the conflict in Sudan, and has it taken any actions in response to the crisis?
- How can the International Community improve the protection of civilians in conflict-affected areas?
- What measures can be taken to ensure compliance with agreements and ceasefires?
- How can humanitarian access be improved while still respecting Sudan's sovereignty?
- How can regional bodies, such as the AU, contribute to achieving regional peace?

- What measures can be taken to protect children and women from conflict-related violence and exploitation?
- How can IDPs be supported during and after the conflict?
- How can Human Rights Violators be held accountable while still supporting efforts towards reconciliation and long-term peace in Sudan?

Appendix

- https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cjel2nn22z9o
- https://www.icc-cpi.int/darfur
- https://www.unwomen.org/en/articles/faqs/how-women-and-girls-are-being-targeted-in-the-war-in-sudan
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Contact Information

Ghada Bdeir

Ghada_Bdeir@abs.edu.jo

+962788888120

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